UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends maintenance of UNIKOM, citing contribution to reduction of tension along Iraq-Kuwait border.

+ Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is meeting commitment to close border with Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Co-Chairmen of ICFY report.

+ Improved weather brings heavier fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bihac safe area shelled for fifth day in row.

+ Jurisdiction of proposed international criminal court and power of Security Council to refer cases discussed in Ad Hoc Committee.

+ Member States owe United Nations $2.8 billion as of 31 March; $1.1 billion owed to regular budget and $1.7 billion to peace-keeping.

+ Deputy Special Representative Ossa to be UNDP Resident Representative in Haiti.

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The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) has contributed significantly to the reduction of tension and the preservation of calm in its area of operation, and should be maintained, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 31 March, he said calm had generally prevailed along the border and in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait over the last six months. However, there had been a period of tension in October in connection with reports about the deployment of Iraqi troops north of the zone.

On 13 March, two United States citizens had been apprehended by Iraqi police after mistakenly crossing the border, the Secretary-General continued. The two had been allowed to pass a UNIKOM checkpoint because, with darkness falling, the sentries on duty had mistaken their white vehicle for one

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belonging to the United Nations. The procedures at the checkpoint had since been tightened, and the Organization was making an effort to have the two men released.

The Secretary-General commended UNIKOM for the manner in which it discharged its responsibilities. The Mission maintained a high level of vigilance through its patrols and liaison activities, and provided administrative and logistic support for United Nations agencies in Iraq and Kuwait.

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The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is continuing to meet its commitment to close its land border with areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by Bosnian Serb forces, according to the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. In a report on the operations of the Conference's Mission to the Federal Republic, they also concluded that there had been no commercial transshipments across the border between the two countries in the last 30 days. The report was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in a letter dated 31 March.

The Co-Chairmen called attention to the Mission's financial difficulties. Operating costs were being sharply reduced, and no new observers were being taken on to replace those who left. They warned that the number of international observers on duty would fall from 163 to a minimal threshold of 150 if financial constraints were not eased. An observer complement below 150 might be unable to provide sufficiently credible information to certify whether the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was complying with its commitment to close the border. If the draft six-month budget of $3.66 million were fulfilled, the Mission could bring the complement of international observers up to 250.

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Spring-like weather has brought heavier fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a United Nations spokesman said today. He noted an increase in military activity around Tuzla and Travnik, where Bosnian Government forces have been on the offensive in recent weeks. The Bihac safe area was shelled for the fifth day in a row, with three impacts reported today. Those shells were fired from the north-west of the town, and might have come from Croatian Serb positions. The Bosnian Serbs were responsible for the shelling in the past four days.

There was also increased military activity in Sarajevo, the spokesman continued. Bosnian Government forces fired heavy machine-guns into a suburb controlled by Bosnian Serbs, prompting retaliatory mortar fire against a Government-held village. However, the city's airport remained open.

The spokesman expressed concern about the resupply situation of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The Bosnian Serbs have not allowed fuel deliveries to the eastern enclaves since 2 March. UNPROFOR fuel

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supplies have also been running low in Sarajevo. However, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoys have been reaching the eastern enclaves on a regular basis. A UNHCR convoy reached the Bihac pocket today, although the agency has not been meeting its delivery targets since the relief effort began last October.

Meanwhile, the Croatian Serbs have informed the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) that they will not cooperate with military observers or civilian police patrolling in Sector East until UNCRO's new mandate is clarified. They also said that they objected to the new mission's name.

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There should be a clear and precise definition of the crimes that would fall under the jurisdiction of the proposed international criminal court, speakers told the Ad Hoc Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court yesterday. Some said the court's jurisdiction should be limited to the most serious crimes, which must be precisely defined. The current provisions on jurisdiction only enumerated certain crimes without clearly defining what they were. The statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was cited as a model for defining crimes against humanity and genocide.

Some speakers said the Security Council should not have the authority to refer cases directly to the proposed court without the consent of States. Algeria said such authority would not necessarily be governed by international law and would derogate from the rule requiring acceptance of the jurisdiction of the court by States before a case could be brought before it. Giving the Security Council that privilege would mean a considerable expansion of its powers. It would also disregard the authority of the General Assembly in the area of international peace and security.

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As of 31 March, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.8 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $1.1 billion was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.7 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $527 million to the regular budget and $553 million to peace-keeping. The Russian Federation owed $63 million to the regular budget and $565 million to peace-keeping.

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The Deputy Special Representative for Haiti, Cristian Ossa, has been appointed as the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the country, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. He noted that it was the first such integration of a United Nations aid effort with a peace-keeping operation.

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